

## **COUNCIL ON AGING SPECIAL MEETING**

Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002

**C.O.A. Members Present:** Alan Root, Al Chevan, Sara Wolff, Jean Haggerty, Barbara Melrose, Doris Mundo, Ben Bowditch, Isaac BenEzra

**Staff Members Present:** John Clobridge, Nancy Pagano, Barbara Slovin

### **Update on Cuts Anticipated in Various Town Departments**

John reiterated that the **Town Manager is recommending a \$2000 cut to the COA's Center Activities budget**, but no more reductions are asked (at this time) for FY'03. (This is an improvement over what was thought a few weeks ago.) Though this year's budget is bad, Nancy Maglione predicts that next fiscal year's budget will be even worse.

Barbara Melrose asked what cuts other departments have to make as well as what cuts are asked of the Human Services Funding Committee. She feels it would be useful to look at how the cuts compared to ours on a percentage basis.

John shared that **LSSE** had its Aquatics Director resign and that Director Linda Chalfant was told to find the \$10,000 to fund this position elsewhere in her budget if she wanted to hire someone. **The Human Services Funding Committee** benefited financially from the First Call for Help Agency moving to Easthampton. The committee's budget cut is roughly equal to the First Call piece that was removed. **Children's Services**, with its small budget, is not likely to be cut. **Veteran's Services** monies are mandated relative to the number of veterans and likely not to be cut. The **Public Safety** budget, particularly as it relates to the **Police**, will be looking at sizeable reductions.

### **COA and Staff Discussion Regarding Town Meeting Strategy**

Alan expressed the view that if the committee does speak at Town Meeting it should be to express that **we accept the cut(s) to our budget, but that they hurt us** as we are trying to move forward in several areas. We continue to look for outside grants (like that found for our Nursing Center) to support our programs. Alan pointed out the concern that TM might point to the Trust as a source of money to fill the gap.

We should make sure that members of the FinCom and Town Meeting get copies of *The Senior Spirit* and other documents as necessary. Al Chevan thinks it would be **valuable to look at what seniors are already paying to participate in S.C. programs**. He recommended that this be part of a handout at Town Meeting. Doris feels that seniors and children have a tendency to be relegated to the level of "second class citizens" when it comes to budgets. Barbara Melrose feels that it is essential that **Senior Trust funds must always be viewed as a supplement and not as a replacement for town appropriated funding of its budget. She feels strongly that a statement should be made at TM.**

Jean stated that some monies can be raised. Doris Mundo reported that the Agawam Senior Center serves breakfast using volunteers. This generates a great deal of money although only basically consisting of juice, coffee, toast and English muffins. Newspapers are made available too.

Barbara Melrose requested future COA agenda item relative to PVTa "on demand" van transportation cuts rumored. This transportation is mandated for disabled, but not necessarily for those who are non-disabled seniors.

**It was voted that Al Chevan, Jean Haggerty, Doris Mundo and Sara Wolff would decide content of a Town Meeting oral presentation that would reluctantly accept budget cuts but would explain the need for sufficient funds to carry out the COA mission regarding growing senior population in Amherst. Alan Root and John Clobridge will develop a printed flyer for Town Meeting distribution.**

Alan is concerned about decisions concerning fees that seniors would pay for parking in the new garage. Isaac said a 33% increase for the garage project will be announced. He is part of a rally to be held Friday at Bangs to discuss several issues of concern to seniors.

**A summary from Alan Root and Nancy Pagano's Notes**